REMARKS

Claims 1-24 were pending when last examined. With this Response, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19. All pending claims are shown in the detailed listing above.

AMENDMENT TO CLAIMS

Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 have been amended to correct a minor typographical error.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Butler (US Patent No. 6,584,493) in view of Tang et al. (US Patent No. 6,349,327).

According to the Examiner, "Butler discloses the invention as claimed including a conferencing and collaboration system (see abstract). Tang discloses the invention as claimed including a distributed work environment (see abstract)." The Examiner continues by then quoting the elements of the present claims and citing various portions of either Butler or Tang et al. as disclosing the same. The Examiner concludes, "It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the monitoring, associating, and communicating between process of Tang with the partitioning of processes of Butler. A person of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to do this to maintain lists of services being offered and to balance workload between processes."

The various portions of Butler or Tang et al. cited by the Examiner do not disclose or teach the elements of the claims as argued by the Examiner.

For example, the Examiner cites column 13, lines 43-67 of Tang et al. for disclosing "associating a respective management process with each of said plurality of logical processes, said logical processes configured so that each said logical process is capable of communicating with every other said logical process thru said respective management

process." In reality, this cited portion of Tang et al. does not have any mention of a "management process" or a "logical process," much less "associating a respective management process with each of said plurality of logical processes" or "each said logical process is capable of communicating with every other said logical process through said respective management process." For convenience, column 13, lines 43-67 of Tang et al. is reproduced below.

Associated with each encounter-aware application 131 is an encounter proxy object 135. The encounter proxy object 135 provides the encounter-aware application 131 a communication mechanism to the encounter server 141. The encounter proxy object 135 accepts from the application 131 a status message describing the user's current position in the application 131. The encounter proxy object 135 is able to obtain a handle to the person object 137 of the worker. The encounter proxy 135 also knows the identity of the application 131 with which it is associated. The encounter proxy object 135 binds the worker's handle, and application identity with the status message and passes it to the encounter server 141. In this manner, the application 131 does not have to interface directly with the encounter server 141.

The encounter proxy 135 further provides to the encounter server 141 a handle to a match object 133 included in the encounter-aware application 131. This allows the server 141 to directly communicate with the match object 133 and pass to it user position data for a determination of the task proximity of two users. The handle to the match object 133 is provided to the encounter server 141 preferably when the application 131 is executed as a new process.

For each user on each computer 101 there is provided an encounter server 141. The encounter server 141 informs the encounter window 143 of a given user when a representation

Similarly, the Examiner cites column 13, lines 56-65 and column 14, lines 18-32 of Tang et al. for disclosing "communicating between said logical processes using said respective management processes." Again, this cited portion of Tang et al. does not have any mention of a "management process" or a "logical process," much less "communicating between said logical processes using said respective management processes." Column 13, lines 56-65 of Tang et al. has been already given above. For further convenience, column 14, lines 18-32 of Tang et al. is reproduced below.

The encounter server 141 receives the status messages from the encounter proxy objects 135 on its computer 101, and from other encounter servers 141, and stores these status messages 147. The status messages from the encounter proxy objects 135 identify the application 131, the user's position in the application 131, and the user's handle and position, and a handle to the match object 133 contained in the application 131, if any. In the preferred embodiment, when the encounter server 141 receives a status message from an encounter proxy object 135, it adds a timestamp to it. The timestamp is useful for ordering the appearance of icons 22 in the encounter window 143, and determining task proximity. The encounter server 141 then sends the status message to all other encounter servers 141 on the network 123.

Likewise, the Examiner cites column 14, lines 1-50 and column 16, lines 29-35 of Tang et al. for disclosing "Monitoring said respective management processes with a single supervisor process." Again, this cited portion of Tang et al. does not have any mention of a "management process" or a "logical process," much less "monitoring said respective management processes with a single supervisor process." For convenience, column 14, lines 1-50 of Tang et al. is reproduced below.

of person object 137 has to be updated. The encounter server 143 does this according to status messages received from encounter proxy objects 135 on the same computer 101, and from encounter servers 141 on other computers 101. If a user is logged on to two computers 101, there are two encounter servers 141 for the user. Similarly, there may be multiple servers 141 on a single computer for multiple users.

An encounter server 141 maintains a list of the encounter-aware applications 131 on the computer 101, receiving the information about each application 131 from its encounter proxy 135. The server 141 further maintains information identifying which application 131 is currently active (other applications 131 may be operating in the background) for the user. This information is provided by the windowing environment, and is updated from time to time as the active application 131 changes.

The encounter server 141 receives the status messages from the encounter proxy objects 135 on its computer 101, and from other encounter servers 141, and stores these status messages 147. The status messages from the encounter proxy objects 135 identify the application 131, the user's position in the application 131, and the user's handle and position, and a handle to the match object 133 contained in the application 131, if any. In the

preferred embodiment, when the encounter server 141 receives a status message from an encounter proxy object 135, it adds a timestamp to it. The timestamp is useful for ordering the appearance of icons 22 in the encounter window 143, and determining task proximity. The encounter server 141 then sends the status message to all other encounter servers 141 on the network 123.

When the encounter server 141 receives a status message, it compares the received message with stored status messages 147 and identifies status messages that include the same application type or application name, or other matching criteria, and sends the position data included in such status messages to a match object 133 for determining whether the users specified in the status messages are task proximate according to their positions. The encounter server 141 preferably invokes the match object 133 of the currently active application 131.

In a preferred embodiment, the determination of task proximity is made by a match object 133. Each application 131 may have a match object 133 that applies a task proximity rule particular to the type of application. In addition, the encounter server 141 may also have its own library of match objects 133, each one particularly adapted to determining task proximity for different types of applications 131.

And column 16, lines 29-35 of Tang et are al. is reproduced below.

The encounter server 141a also multicasts 813 a status message to all other encounter servers 141 on the network. This status message includes a handle 812 to worker A's person object 137a, an identification number for the computer executing the encounter server 141a, which is worker A's computer, a timestamp generated by the encounter server 141a, the name of the editor 131a, and the position of worker A, which is null.

If the Examiner still believes that the elements of Applicants' claimed invention are disclosed in Butler or Tang et al., the Applicants request the Examiner to specifically identify what items in each of these references correspond to each limitation in the claims. Otherwise, at this point, the rejection of Applicants' Claims 1-24 cannot stand.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and to allow these claims.
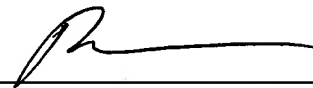
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CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request that the pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue. Should the Examiner wish to discuss the Application, it is requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned at (415) 772-1200.

EXPRESS MAIL LABEL NO.:   Respectfully submitted,

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